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Feenix's freeway folly rolls on

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Folly: A lack of understanding, sense or rational conduct; foolishness. - Webster's New World Dictionary

This newspaper has long asserted that it is likely to be Ahwatukee's fate to some day play host to the South Mountain Freeway.

That is by no means our wish. But the all-but-irresistible pressures created by Arizona's runaway population make a southern freeway all but inevitable. Odds of that freeway being routed through the Gila River Indian Community are small. And the only other route, one that has been on the books for 20 years, is along the Pecos Road alignment.

The battle is by no means over. Only last week, a group of Ahwatukee residents formed a corporation, hired an attorney and summoned their neighbors to the ramparts for the struggles yet to come.

They are fighting for family, for community, for a way of life. And more power to them.

But there is the sense that these good folks are suburbia's counterpart to that Chinese guy who stood in front of the tank in Tiananmen Square in '89. His was a noble cause, too, but the machinery ground forward just the same.

It would at least dull the pain if Phoenix would turn off the folly spigot when it comes to allowing development along the likely right-of-way.

Because Phoenix has allowed development for, lo, these many years, the pain in Ahwatukee will be deep. Some 255 families may be uprooted by eminent domain, their homes bulldozed, their dreams transplanted.

Another outrageous chapter in this story was dug up last week by *The Republic's* Kerry Fehr-Snyder.

Seems an outfit named Speedco wants to set up a truck-maintenance facility out in the West Valley, where the South Mountain will hook up with Interstate 10. The company bought the land, paid \$36,000 to Phoenix in various fees, then found out the land isn't merely near the freeway alignment, it's right smack dab on top of it.

When all is said and done, it may cost taxpayers some \$4 million to buy the property and help Speedco set up shop somewhere else.

The folly, the sheer stupidity, is beyond belief.

Finally - and much too late - Phoenix said Monday it's revising its procedures to prevent any more such waste of tax dollars.

But when and if the freeway has wound its way through Ahwatukee at huge financial and emotional cost, there will be some public officials whose contribution to the story will be one of infamy.

- Thursday

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